# CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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| **Project Name:** | Helle Livestock Water Development |
| **Proposed Implementation Date:** | June 2008 |
| **Proponent:** | Helle Livestock, (John Helle) |
| **Location:** | Section 23 & 24 T 7S – R 7W |
| **County:** | Madison |

## I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Helle Livestock ( John Helle) of 1350 Stone Creek Rd, Dillon, MT has proposed a stock water development on state Trust Land in Section 23 and 24 T 7S - R 7W of Madison County. The purpose of the project is to tie into a developed spring in Section 24 at the old Holden homestead and run a buried pipeline through sections 23 & 24 to an existing water tank on Helle's deeded ground in Section 14 T 7S – R 7W the old Sorenson homestead.

The project would tie into the current lessees (Malesich Ranch) spring development. The new development would provide the over flow water use for Helle Livestock. This use would be a second right to the water and if the spring was to go dry or reduce flow Malesich would retain the first right to the use of the water for their livestock.

The buried pipeline will run through the old Holden homestead which still has buildings and ranch equipment present at the site. There is evidence that the ground that the pipeline would run through has been disturbed and planted with crested wheatgrass near the homestead, and will then run through native range ground in section 24.

## II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

### 1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

*Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.*

A field review of the proposed project was conducted in May of 2008 by Dillon Unit personnel.

Individual scoping notices were sent in May 2008.

Contacts included:

DNRC: Archaeologist, P. Rennie; CLO Area Manager, G. Williams

Montana Natural Heritage Program

Bob Brannon, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks

Ed Malesich of Malesich Ranch Inc, Lessee of Sections 23 and 24

### 2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

The Madison County Weed Board administers the State weed laws in Madison County.

### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A: Action – Install an under ground water pipeline that ties into existing spring box in Section 24 and run pipeline through portions of the two state sections to a stock water tank in Section 14 T7S – R 7W.

Alternative B: No Action – No additional water pipeline would be installed.

## III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

**4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:**
*Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.*

Pipeline would be installed during dry soil conditions to avoid soil disturbance. Pipeline will be installed using a hydraulic ripper and connected to the spring using a back hoe. Installation will cause very little ground disturbance. Disturbed areas will be seeded with native grass mixture.

With recommended mitigation measures, no significant or additional impacts are expected to soil resources.

**5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:**
*Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.*

Currently the spring is protected from livestock use by a barbed wire fence. The actual spring box is covered and protected with corrugated metal pipe and metal cover.

No significant or additional impacts or cumulative effects are expected to occur to water quality, water yield, watershed conditions, fisheries or any other beneficial uses associated with the watersheds adjacent to the proposed project areas or any downstream tributaries.

**6. AIR QUALITY:**
*What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.*

Air quality will not be affected by the proposed project.

**7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:**
*What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.*

No rare plants or cover types have been observed or documented along the proposed pipeline right –of- way. Disturbed area will be seeded with a native grass mixture.

With recommended mitigation measures, no significant impacts or cumulative effects to vegetative communities are expected from the proposed actions.

**8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:**
*Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.*

A variety of big game, small mammals, raptors, songbirds, and grouse may use this area. Motorized travel in the proposed project areas could disrupt wildlife movement and patterns. Presently the road segments are closed to motorized traffic but are being used regularly by the general public. Minimal impacts are anticipated.

**9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:**
*Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.*

**Section 16-T6S-R10W**

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program identified two sensitive species near the proposed project area: Gray Wolf, and Westslope Cutthroat trout.

**Gray Wolf** have been observed in the Sweetwater Hills and the project area is located within this mountain range. The proposed project area falls within the Yellowstone Nonessential Experimental Area for gray wolves. Individuals from packs or transients from other packs could occasionally use portions of the proposed project area, however, activities associated with this project are not expected to effect wolves or recovery efforts.

**Westslope Cutthroat Trout** have been documented in the creeks near the project area however the streams near the project were completely dry when the area was inspected and the spring does not deliver to the Carter or Stone Creek drainages. Impacts to westslope cutthroat trout are not anticipated.

**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**
*Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.*

The DNRC Archaeologist was consulted and there are no known cultural concerns associated with this proposed project on the State lands. The spring was originally used on the Holden Homestead as the main water source for the homestead. There are some dilapidated buildings and farm machinery still at the home site. All associated items from the homestead would be avoided during the pipeline installation. The location of the pipeline was walked and no surface historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources were observed.

**11. AESTHETICS:**
*Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.*

The proposed project is located in an unpopulated area. Due to the remoteness and nature of the proposed project, aesthetics should not be adversely affected.

**12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:**
*Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.*

None.

**13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:**
*List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.*

The DNRC Administrative Rules for State Land Surface Management ARM 36.25.101 through 36.25.817, applicable to management activities on State lands.

## IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

**14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:**
*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

No human health or safety risks are posed by the completion of the proposed project.

**15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:**
*Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.*

The proposed project would allow for improved livestock water availability and improved livestock distribution.

**16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:**
*Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.*

None.

**17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:**
*Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.*

None.

**18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:**
*Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services.*

None.

**19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:**
*List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.*

None.

**20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:**
*Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.*

The proposed project would not alter recreational opportunities on the tracts for the general public.

**21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:**
*Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.*

None.

**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**
*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

None.

**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**
*How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?*

None.

**24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:**
*Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.*

The proposed project will allow Helle Livestock to continue using their deeded ground for grazing purposes. The return to the trust would be for the amount of the Land Use License for a buried stock water pipeline. The lease improvement would not offer any increase in the value of the grazing lease in sections 23 & 24.

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| **EA Checklist Prepared By**: | **Name:** | Tim Egan | **Date:** | June 6, 2008 |
| | **Title:** | Dillon Unit Manager | | |

## V. FINDING

**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

I have selected Alternative A, to authorize installation of the stock water development and buried pipeline.

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

Significant impacts are not expected to occur as a result of the proposed activity. There is no unique habitat or Threatened or Endangered species associated with the proposed activities. Disturbed sites will be seeded with a native grass mixture.

**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

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| | EIS | | More Detailed EA | **X** | No Further Analysis |

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| **EA Checklist Approved By**: | **Name:** Garry Williams | |
| | **Title:** Area Manager | |
| **Signature:** /S/ Garry Williams | | **Date**: 6/16/2008 |

ATTACHMENTS

A – Site Maps

N

Sec 23 + 24 T7S - R7W

● WT = WATER TANK

---- = Buried Pipeline location

Scale 1:24000